

SERVING UP **RESILIENCE**



WINTER CONFERENCE 2026

SERVING UP
RESILIENCE
TUCO WINTER CONFERENCE 2026



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

**GORDON HODGE &
GRAHAM PATTERSON**

Collaborate, Innovate and Deliver:
A Strathclyde Case Study in
Catering Resilience

IN BRIEF

- Who's this guy and why's he talking about conferencing?
- Working collaboratively with internal & external stakeholders to deliver results
- Understanding and describing the value we deliver
- Working out how best to communicate our contribution, depending on the context and audience

THE PLACE OF USEFUL LEARNING



University of
Strathclyde
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**UK UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR
2026**
Daily Mail University Guide

**SCOTTISH UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR
2026**
Times/Sunday Times Good University
Guide

THE QUEEN'S ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
1996, 2019, 2021 & 2023
For Higher and Further Education

UK UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR
2012 & 2019
Times Higher Education



WHAT WE DO

- Our team
- Our assets
- Our performance

24/25

604 events / 44k delegates

Revenue = £2.2m / surplus = £309k

Internal = 60% vol. / 38% val.

External = 40% vol. / 62% val.

25/26 forecast

Revenue = £2.6m / surplus = £439k



HOW WE DO IT

- Our USPs
 - Location
 - Flexibility
 - User-friendly
 - Green credentials
- Our approach





WHAT ABOUT F&B?

- Catering accounted for 48% revenue in 24/25
- Integral to our product and delegate experience
- Sweet spot between choice and operational effectiveness
- Client base is price sensitive esp. internal & public sector
- Meeting a wide variety of needs at a price point that appeals
- Understanding what we are/not

GOALS FOR 2026

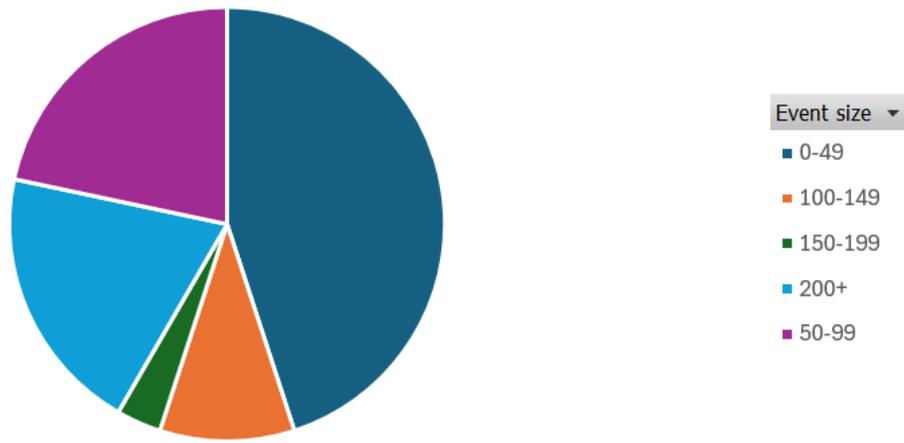
- Dietaries & allergens – best in class
- Sustainability – Menus of Change, food waste
- Neurodiversity
- Benchmarking – not always easy!
- Positively influence developments on campus
- Storytelling based on KPIs – using data to demonstrate our contribution & impact



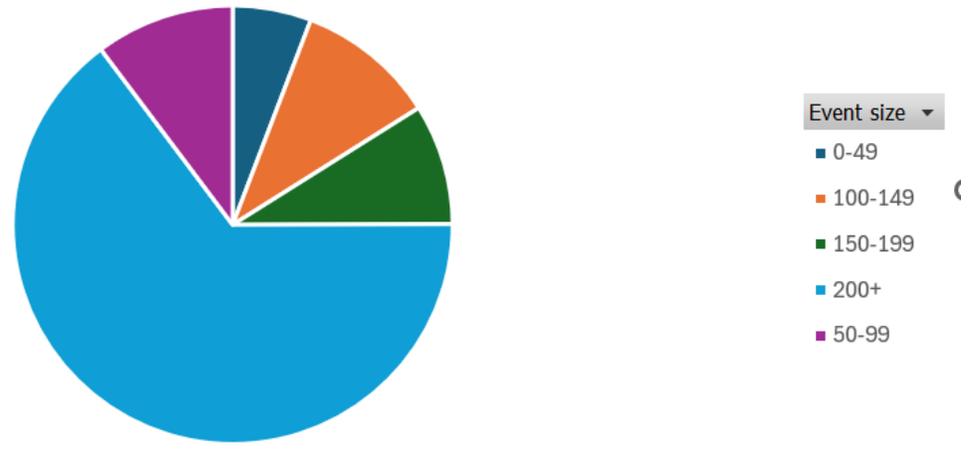
OUR DATA & HOW WE (WOULD LIKE TO) USE IT

- Full disclosure: a work in progress!
- Lots of data – but what do we need?
- Relate our work to institutional themes & KPIs
- Examples:
 - industry sectors
 - events by size

Size by Volume



Size by Value



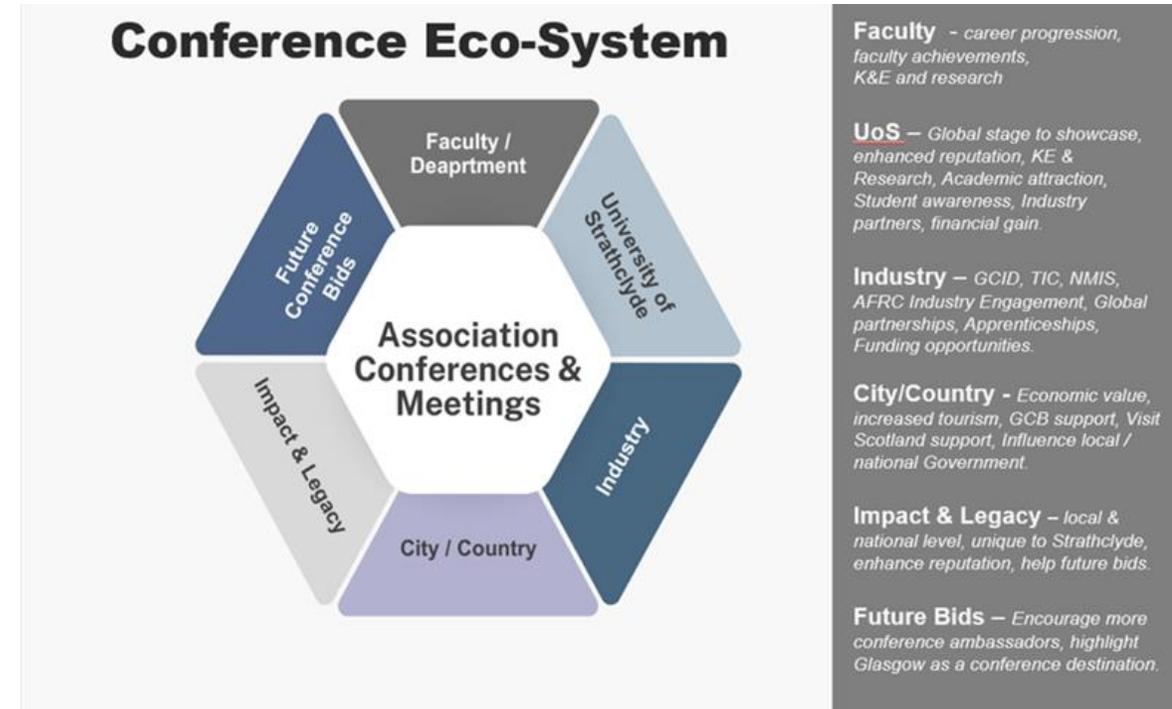
WORKING WITH OUR ACADEMICS

- **Proactive communication** with academics across all Faculties
- Ensure that the value of hosting conferences and events is **understood at all levels of the institution**, as a means of building connections and driving commercial revenue.
- Focus on the **impact & legacy** for academics and their research
- **Conference Management Service**

Frequency	Method	Format	Audience Profile
Annually	Executive Team	Update/positioning paper – looking back and forward <small>(for information only)</small>	Executive leadership across institution
	Leadership Group	Presentation/Q&A	Senior leadership across institution, incl. HoDs, PS Directors, Vice/Associate Deans
	Research & Knowledge Exchange Committee	Presentation/Q&A	Senior leadership across institution with responsibility for Research & KE
Every 6 months	SPIRAL	Half-day session on organising conferences & events	Early career researchers from across the institution
	OSDU	Half-day session on organising conferences & events	Academic & PS staff from across the institution
Quarterly	Faculty Knowledge Exchange Committees	Presentation/Q&A <small>(one Faculty per quarter)</small>	Faculty leadership with responsibility for Research & KE
	CCO update	1:1 meeting to update on KPIs	CCO & Director MDS
	Inside Strathclyde	Case studies profiling excellence in conferencing and events, with a particular focus on collaboration.	Academic & PS staff from across the institution
Monthly	Newsletter	Updates, case studies, calls to action	C&E clients, internal & external
	LinkedIn	Longer posts/blogs focused on relevant topics in events and/or higher education	C&E clients, internal & external

WORKING WITH OUR ACADEMICS

- **Conference Ecosystem**
positioning conferences as an effective means of driving excellence in research and consultancy
- Conferences & meetings are an **enabler**
- **Long game**
how do we keep prospects alive, measure impact/legacy?
- **Case study** – Management Science



An aerial photograph of Glasgow, Scotland, showing a mix of modern and historic architecture, green spaces, and a large stadium. The city is set against a backdrop of rolling hills under a clear sky.

**GLASGOW
CONVENTION
BUREAU**

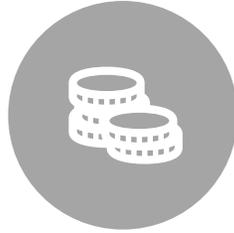


**Best UK Convention Bureau
19 YEARS RUNNING**

DESTINATION GLASGOW: THE VISITOR ECONOMY



GLASGOW TOURISM 2030



**GLASGOW ECONOMIC
STRATEGY**



**GLASGOW CLIMATE
ACTION PLAN**



**GLASGOW
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY
2030**



**SCOTLAND OUTLOOK
2030 – NATIONAL
TOURISM STRATEGY**



**GLASGOW CITY REGION
ECONOMIC STRATEGY**



TEAM GLASGOW

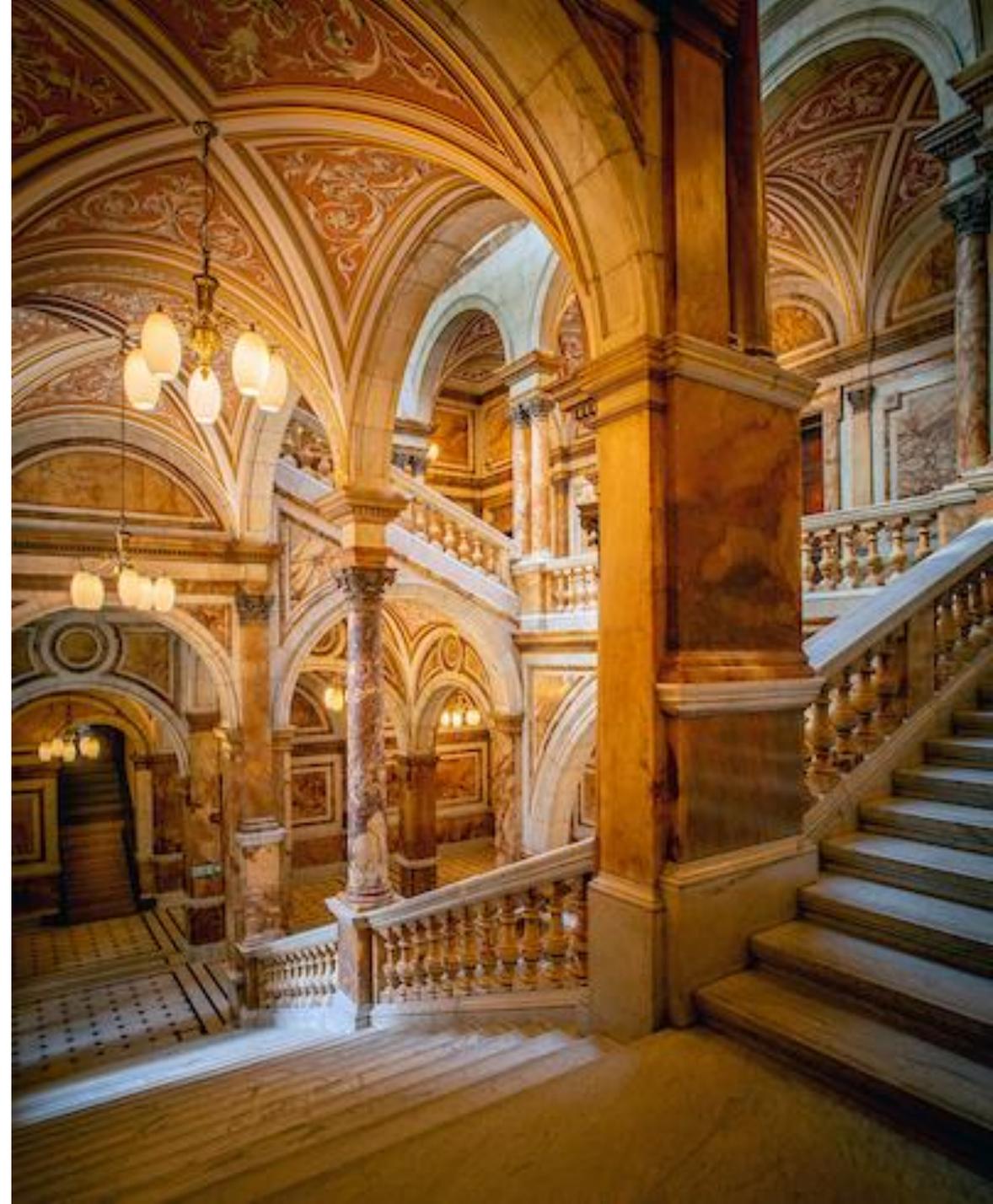


GLOBAL
**DESTINATION
SUSTAINABILITY**
INDEX

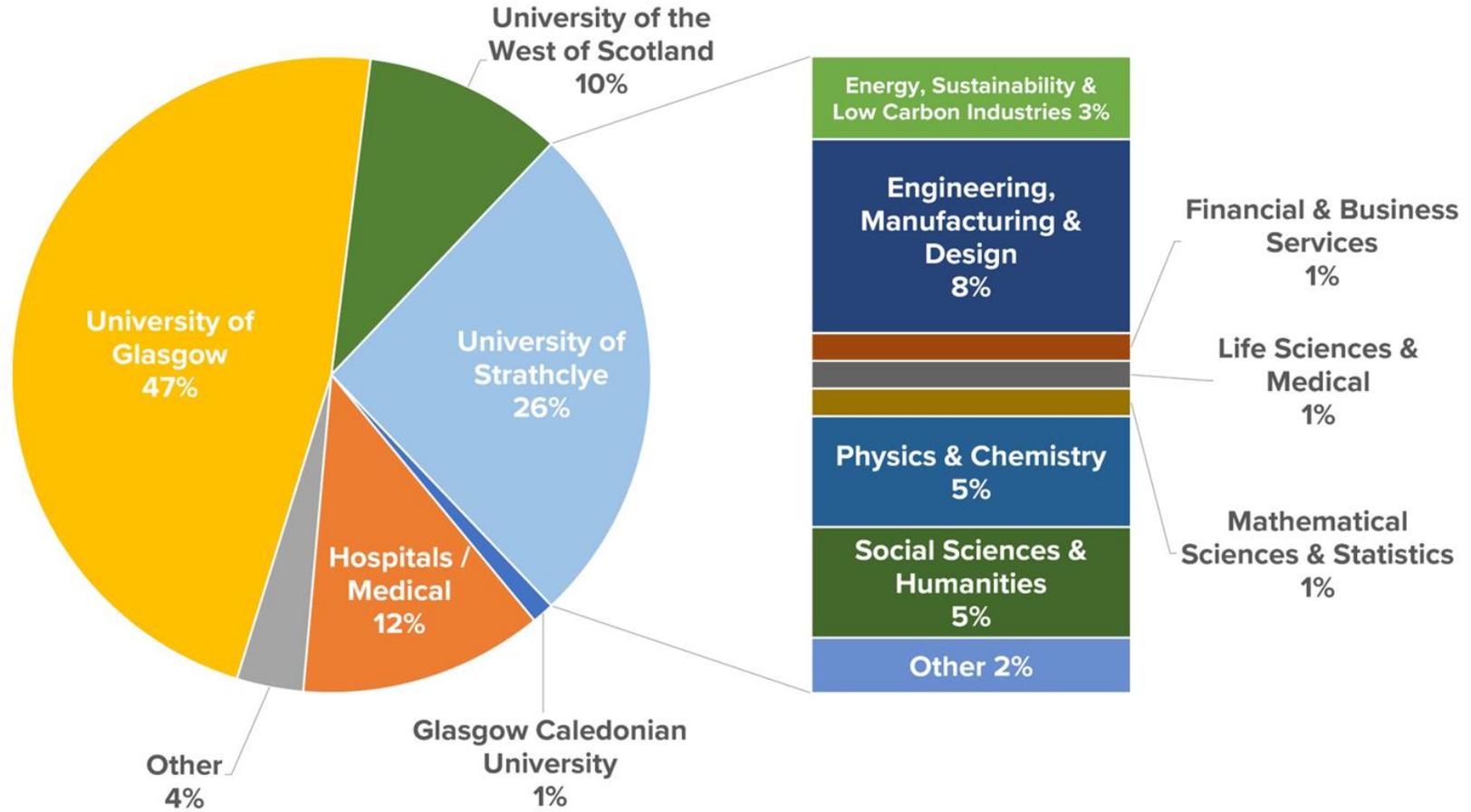
- More international conferences & delegates than any UK city outside London
- £140m economic benefit from 150,000 delegates attending 500 conferences (24/25)
- Working with city partners on 120 bids and enquiries to 2033, worth £366m
- Global Destination Sustainability Index: Glasgow ranks 5th in the world, first in the UK

CONFERENCE AMBASSDOR PROGRAMME

- Established in 1990 - first in the UK
- Supports individuals who wish to encourage their own professional associations, sectors and groups to meet in Glasgow
- Approx. 300 active ambassadors, drawn from the city's academic, scientific, medical and business communities
- Free, dedicated support services and guidance throughout bid/delivery process



STRATHCLYDE'S AMBASSADORS





THE MORAL OF THE STORY

Events and hospitality are **effective communication tools** with both internal and external audiences

Food & beverage are fundamental to quality event delivery

Events and hospitality deliver **profitable commercial revenue** which supports other areas that do not

Effective delivery in events and hospitality also supports **excellence in research and industry engagement**, as well as **regional economic development**



University of
Strathclyde
Glasgow

Resilience as Strategic Survival

***Graham Paterson
Deputy Director, Campus Services
(Hospitality, Catering and Ross Priory)***

Resilience Started Here

- ‘Abolish the catering services’ - 3 consecutive Student Presidents
- Catering is too expensive and poor quality – consistent student and staff feedback
- ‘Should Catering not just focus on selling teas and coffees?’ - A member of the Executive Team.
- ‘Do people really want to know about food and drink?’ – The Head of Communications and Marketing.

Alignment to University Strategic Goals



Operational Excellence

How can we beat the high street on price while maximising income opportunities?



Outstanding Student Experience

How can we create services and initiatives that directly enhance student engagement, wellbeing, and satisfaction?



Transformative Innovation and Impact

Where can we collaborate with academics, students, and partners to innovate and create measurable impact beyond day-to-day catering?

Strategic Priorities

Driving Excellence in Student Engagement



Operational Excellence

Complement the High Street,
— Don't Compete with it —

 **Strategic Category Pricing**

 **Flexible Outlets, Adaptive Offer**



Outstanding Student Experience

◆ **Facilitate Student-led Activities**

◆  **Student Cooking Initiative**

◆  **Enhance Student Hubs** 



Transformative Innovation &

◆ **Create Research-Aligned Opportunities**

 **Student Project Development**

 **Integrate with Teaching Goals**



Complement the high street. Don't compete with it.

Within a 60 second walk from the heart of the Campus:

- 8 branded F&B outlets
- 1 local long-standing café
- Sainsburys.

New Student Union opened with 2 cafes, a takeaway and the main bar, also in the heart of the campus.



Complement the high street. Don't compete with it.

Flexible, student-led offer

- Strath Cafés launched as a flexible umbrella brand
- Student feedback used to identify gaps in the high street
- Reduced direct product and brand comparison

Balanced pricing strategy

- Core value items protected for students
- Luxury categories support margin recovery

Relevance — not price — became our competitive advantage



Facilitating Student-Led Activities



Student Cooking Initiative

Exam Diet Wellbeing Support

Community Spaces

Lord Todd Project



- Catering-driven project in collaboration with Accommodation, Estates, and Saxon
- Small budget, short project lifespan

- Inclusive student space
- Partnership with Social Bite and Matthew Algie was a first and socially progressive
- Sustainable ethos
- Redefined how Catering-related estate projects are delivered

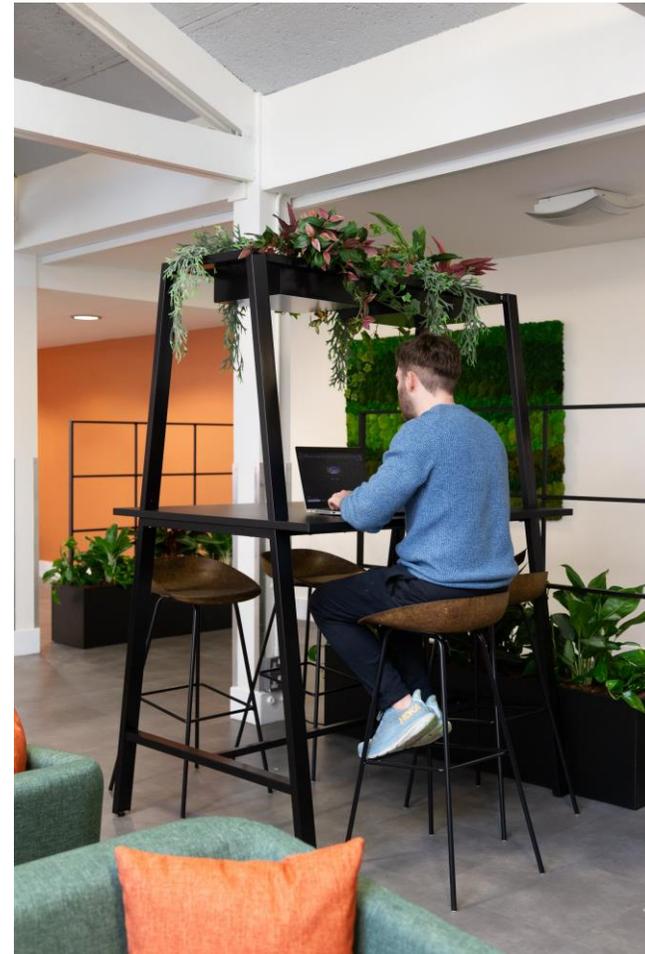


Lord Todd Project

Used coffee bags, denim and army khakis to contemporary furniture



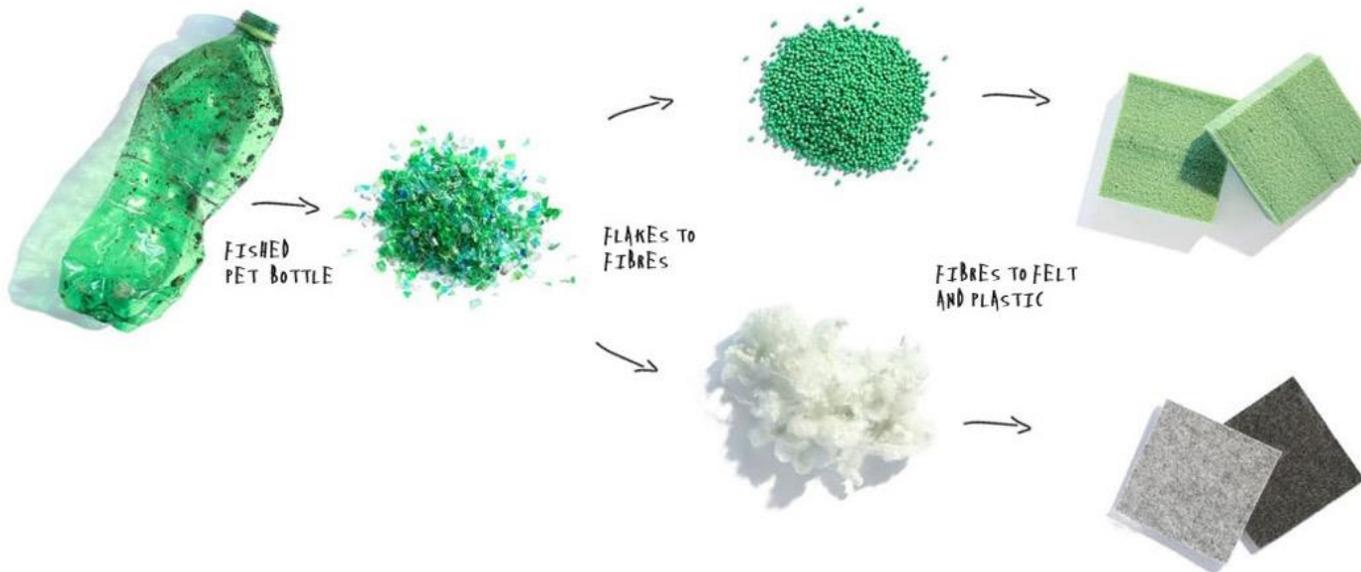
Biodegradable Hemp Chair & Bar Stool



Lord Todd Project

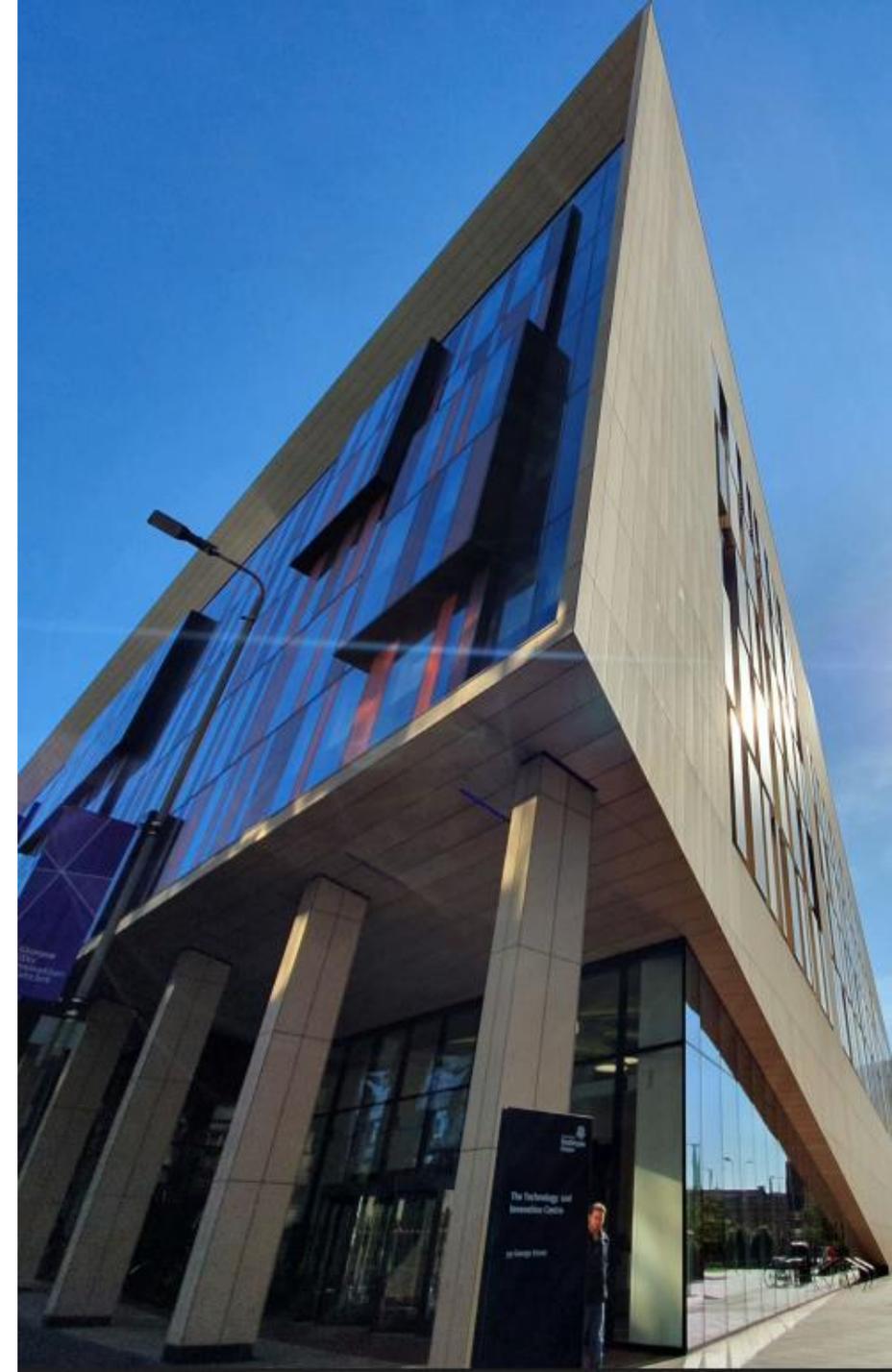
Recycled PET Felt Acoustic Panels

The process involves converting post-consumer PET bottles into a non-woven textile material that is then used to create the acoustic panels. By utilizing recycled materials, these panels help to divert plastic waste from landfills, reducing the environmental impact associated with traditional disposal methods.



Identifying Research and Course Aligned Activities

Psychological Sciences & Health	Nudging research
Department of Marketing	Contributing to Nudging research Development of a Marketing Plan
Department of Management Science	Various Business Analysis and Consulting MA Projects
Design, Manufacturing & Engineering Management	Cobot Project
Mechanical Engineering	Smart Composter research project
Strathclyde Institute of Education	Practical teaching credit opportunities



The Cobot Project



The Cobot Project – Strategic Intent



- Collaboration with Design, Manufacturing & Engineering
- Catering seen as a real-world testbed for innovation
- Living lab supporting PhD research and R&D
- Strong alignment with Strathclyde's research strategy
- Reputation impact: media, visits, student recruitment



What Resilience Looks Like in Practice

Now:

- Senior leaders trust us and have transferred leadership of catering and social space-related estate development projects to us.
- Strathclyde Catering is engaged in strategic conversations and frameworks as an active contributor at senior committees.
- Academics are aware of us and seek us out as collaborators.
- Students are beginning to see us as part of their journey, and the Student Exec support us.

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